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ABSTRACT

The document contains a paper on the cognitive-decision approach to moral/citizenship education and three critiques of the paper. The major paper characterizes cognitive decisionists, describes strengths and weaknesses of their approach, and assesses the extent to which empirical knowledge is available for the approach. Cognitive decisionists believe that the primary goal of moral education is to teach students to make and act on rational decisions about moral issues. The major strength of the approach is its ability to distinguish between education and indoctrination. A major weakness is disagreement among theorists about the standards that apply to moral judgment. Empirical studies tend to focus on behavior without concern for underlying reasons. The author concludes that cognitive decisionists should give more attention to the development of teacher training materials and to research to identify inadequacies in moral reasoning. The first critique defends the cognitive-decision approach as legitimizing the school's claim to autonomy in moral education. The second critique suggests an approach to moral or civic education, and the final critique proposes a community-based program of moral/citizenship education rather than a new curricular offering in the schools. (Author/KC)

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COGNITIVE-DECISION THEORISTS' APPROACH TO MORAL/CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

MORAL/CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CONVERENCE

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 4-6, 1976

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PREFACE

This pamphlet, one of a series of four, contains a major paper on moral education and three critiques of that paper. The paper was presented at a national Conference on Moral/Citizenship Education held in June of 1976, and the critiques were commissioned independent of the conference. Three other major presentations at that conference, and accompanying critiques, comprise the companion pamphlets to this one. Each pamphlet sets forth and illuminates one of four theoretical approaches to moral education: cognitive-decision theory, developmental theory, prosocial theory/research, and values theory. These approaches were selected because it was felt that they represent areas of research, development, and writing which have had the most significant impact on the field.

Although the series is conceived as a unit providing an overview of selected moral education perpsectives, each pamphlet is intended to stand alone as representative and expository of one specific approach.

Conference Background

The conference at wnich the papers were presented was a highlight of a 1975-76 yearlong planning effort carried out by Research for Better Schools (RBS) under contract with the National Institute of Education (NIE). The conference brought together approximately 85 experts representing a

variety of viewpoints and interests.

The primary purpose of the conference (in addition to facilitating an exchange of information across the field) was to develop moral/citizenship education recommendations from as wide a base as possible concerning research, development, and dissemination. The key process was one of interaction, with work groups arriving at recommendations on the basis of the four major informational papers collected in this publication series, and work-group deliberations. The recommendations were then submitted to NIE and the public.

On the basis of the conference recommendations, a coordinated plan of R, D, & D for moral/citizenship education (at that time termed ethical-citizenship education) was developed which has the endorsement of a wide and influential constituency. Work is in progress to advocate and implement that plan.

In the past year Moral/Citizenship Education and Ethical-Citizenship Education have merged as a broadly conceived Citizen Education component of RBS. The front and back matter of this pamphlet summarizes aspects of that component, including objectives, affiliations, and resources.

The Cognitive-Decision Approach to Moral Education

The major paper and critiques in this pamphlet deal with the cognitive-decision approach to moral education, a brief

summary of which follows. This highly condensed statement can portray only the most general characteristics of the cognitive-decision perspective. It is included here simply to orient the reader, not to define the field.

The cognitive-decision theorists are just beginning to have an impact on educational practice. A limited number of educators are introducing principles of moral action and cognitive-decision processes in selected classrooms. In addition, some promising instructional materials have recently appeared on the market. The cognitive-decision theorists find their roots in philosophy and, more specifically, in ethics, where the process of decision making and the principles employed in making evaluations and judgments are researched using a process of logic, introspection, and historical analysis. The assumption is made that persons are rational and that they can be rational actors. To do this, they must know how to make decisions about moral issues and understand the principles or standards to use in making those decisions. While there are differences among these theorists concerning the processes for making personal moral decisions, they agree concerning many of the principles that should be considered. Most often these principles include self-interest, consideration of others, a regard for reason, a regard for historical experience, and cultural wisdom. Thus, the educational objective is to instruct individuals in the

nature of the principles of making moral decisions and to teach the skills which will enable learners to translate the principles and the process into action. To date, the proponents of this position have been primarily philosophers. A small number of educators in England, and fewer in the United States, have picked up the ideas and are developing materials and working in the schools.

THE COGNITIVE-DECISION APPROACH TO MORAL EDUCATION: ITS PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Jerrold R. Coombs

University of British Columbia

This paper attempts a general characterization of cognitive decisionists, describes the strengths and weaknesses of their approach to moral education, and assesses the extent to which empirical knowledge is available for the success of this approach. Cognitive decisionists are identified as those who believe that the primary goal of moral education is to teach students to make and act on rational decisions about moral issues. Moral reasoning is seen as a species of practical reasoning, and moral judgments depend on reasons. The educator's job is to teach students to make well-grounded moral judgments. The major strength of the approach is its ability to distinguish clearly between education and indoctrination. A major weakness is disagreement among theorists about the standards of justification that apply to moral judgment. It is argued that much of the empirical work on such phenomena as empathy, altruism, and resistance to temptation may not be relevant to the cognitive-decision approach because it focuses on behavior without concern for the underlying reasons. Consequently, careful sifting of the empirical literature is advised. Cognitive decisionists, it is suggested, should give more attention to the development of teacher-training materials and to research designed to identify specific kinds of inadequacies in moral reasoning.

The purpose of this paper is to survey the problems and prospects of that approach to moral education which is here called the cognitive-decision approach. It should be made clear at the outset that this label designates no specific method or theory of moral education. Rather, it picks out a class of educational theorists and practitioners having a

common general conception of the goals or outcomes of moral education. Persons taking the cognitive-decision approach believe that moral decisions can and do differ with regard to the degree to which they are rational or well grounded. They believe further that moral decision making is a complex intellectual task which can be done well or poorly. As a result of these beliefs they take the view that the primary goal of moral education is to teach students to make and to act on intelligent or rational decisions about moral issues.

For the cognitive-decision theorist, the development of a program of moral education has several clearly differentiated aspects. The first, and perhaps most crucial, is the task of describing and justifying a conception of what it means to be rational in making moral decisions. The second aspect involves describing the knowledge, abilities, dispositions, sensitivities, etc., that one must acquire in order to make rational moral decisions; it also involves justifying these components as necessary to being rational in making moral decisions. The third aspect is the development of effective and morally acceptable educational means for producing the relevant components. Far more time and effort have been devoted to the first task than to the others. This is not surprising, for if no conception of morality can be justified, a cognitive-decision approach to moral education makes no sense.

The Cognitive-Decision Approach

Because of the considerable differences among cognitive decisionists, it is difficult to provide a description of this kind of approach specific enough to be useful. Consequently, after noting a few features of this perspective, I will give more substance to the account by outlining the views of several of its major figures.

Cognitive decisionists contend that, contrary to much popular opinion, moral views are not merely matters of taste, preference, or convention. Logically they are as much dependent on reasons or grounds as are empirical beliefs. Consequently, moral reasoning should be taken seriously. Moral judgment is a species of practical reasoning, i.e., reasoning about what to do. Practical reasoning involves two distinct kinds of reasons: (a) motivational reasons such as wants, purposes, or rules of conduct, and (b) beliefs about what actions will fulfill the wants, purposes, or rules of conduct. The conclusion of the argument is a decision to act in a certain way, or simply an action. In moral decision, as distinguished from other kinds of practical judgment, the motivational reason is some moral ideal or principle. A simple case of moral reasoning might go like this: Sigafoos believes that it is wrong to endanger the lives of others. He thinks he would do so if he were to drive home, since he has been drinking this evening. The conclusion of his

reasoning is the decision not to drive home--or that it would be wrong for him to drive home. Of course, the reasoning leading to a moral conclusion can be complex, but our simple example will serve for now. Notice that this sort of moral reasoning is deductive in form. The moral rule or principle serves as the major premise, and the belief about what fulfills the rule serves as the minor premise. There is no implication that a person making the decision necessarily rehearses such reasons to himself when deciding, though in more complex cases he may do so. Typically the reasons become articulated only when someone is asked to explain or justify his decision.

All this, of course, is a very old story. Still, it is necessary to repeat it here as a first step in clarifying what the cognitive-decision approach is all about. Basically it is concerned with teaching students to make moral decisions on the basis of good reasons. This implies that there are ways of determining whether the two sorts of reasons involved in moral reasoning are <u>good</u> reasons. It further implies that when there are good reasons both for and against taking an action, there are ways of determining which is the better reason. It is at the point of saying how one determines the adequacy of reasons that cognitive decisonists begin to part company. Nonetheless there is some element of agreement, even on this matter. Remember that one sort of

reason involved in moral deliberation is a belief about what action will fulfill the moral principle or ideal. This belief may be an idea either about some empirical matter or about the meaning of a term. Obviously if either sort of belief is false, it does not qualify as a good reason. The means of determining the truth of empirical beliefs are well established. This is not say that such verification is always an easy matter; it is not! Appropriate means for determining the truth of beliefs about the meanings of words are also available, but they are not so well known. Moral education must teach people to verify their relevant empirical beliefs and to be clear about the meanings of the concepts they use in moral reasoning. On these points cognitive decisionists are in firm agreement. Carrying out these tasks, however, requires a variety of abilities and understandings not peculiar to moral education. It is at this point that moral education shades into education simpliciter.

How the moral ideal or principle involved in one's reasoning can be justified is a more complex question. Still, cognitive decisionists agree that such ideals and principles can be justified. My own view is that there are a variety of steps to be taken in this attempt, including (a) determining that the principle is deducible from a previously justified principle, (b) determining that the consequences of everyone

adopting the principle would not be disastrous, (c) determining that one can accept the moral decisions that issue from the principle in all cases to which it logically applies, and (d) determining that the principle can be publicly advocated without defeating the point of acting on the principle. A complete justification of a moral principle would also entail showing that in some sense it would be rational to adopt the principle and irrational not to adopt it. On this point, too, I think cognitive decisionists would agree. Interestingly, disagreement centers not so much on what principles are considered to be justified but on how they can be shown to be rational.

Let us now flesh out our account of the cognitive-decision approach by looking briefly at the work of several prominent figures in the area. We will be concerned with both those who have concentrated mainly on explicating the content of moral education and those who have actually carried out educational programs from this point of view.

Contribution of Richard Peters

The work of Richard Peters (1966, 1972, 1974), being both influential and comprehensive, makes a good starting place. In Peters' view, rational morality is concerned with actions or decisions for which there are reasons. These reasons derive from personal ideals and from three different orders of rules governing interpersonal conduct. The most signifi-

cant class of rules are those which Peters calls fundamental principles: impartiality, respect for persons, the consideration of interests, freedom, and truth telling. These principles are fundamental because they must be presupposed by anyone who seriously asks, as Peters asks, "What are there reasons for doing?" To put the matter another way, the fundamental principles are presuppositions of being rational in dealing with moral issues. The principles determine what features of a situation are morally relevant considerations, i.e., count as reasons in determining moral decisions. One central concern of moral education, then, is that students come to learn these fundamental principles. This does not necessarily mean that they should learn any particular formulation of the principles but only that certain kinds of considerations are morally relevant. Further, these fundamental principles must be learned in such a way that they become operative in the students' conduct, functioning as motives which move them to act.

Rational morality also involves the use of what Peters calls basic moral rules. These are the rules that, given the fundamental principles, are necessary to any continuing form of social life; they relate to the avoidance of pain and injury, keeping contracts, respecting property, caring for the young. Just as principles must become personalized as motives, so too must basic rules become personalized as

character traits such as honesty, fairness, and unselfishness. Fundamental principles and basic moral rules are justified in all societies at all times.

The third order of Peters' rules, which are referred to as rules of a more relative sort, are tied to particular social conditions. These relative rules are justified by reference to fundamental principles or basic rules and the facts of life in a given society. When the facts of social life change, a previously justified relative rule may cease to be justified. Peters does not make clear what part these relative rules should play in moral education. While learning fundamental rules and basic principles is part of learning moral reasoning, presumably the relative rules are part of the content about which we are to learn to reason.

Commitment to personal ideals is, for Peters, as much a goal of moral education as is commitment to rules governing interpersonal behavior. He argues that "to get a boy committed to some worthwhile activity such as chemistry or engineering is no less part of his moral education than damping down his selfishness" (Peters, 1974, p. 290).

Teaching rules and ideals is not the only concern of moral education. In addition to developing the motives and character traits associated with fundamental principles and basic rules, moral educators must seek to develop those very general traits of character which relate to the manner in

which people follow rules and pursue their ideals. As examples of such traits, Peters cites integrity, persistence, determination, conscientiousness, and consistency. Possessing these traits is what is meant by having character, or strength of character.

Habit formation too has its role to play in moral education. Not only is it desirable that some virtues such as honesty be developed as habits; it is also necessary that children be introduced to some of the basic rules as habits of action, since children must learn to behave in accordance with these rules before they can understand the reasons behind them. Peters sees no necessary conflict between developing habits and developing reasoning. Reason is seen as providing a framework for habit, making it intelligent.

Peters cautions that moral principles cannot be learned in isolation from the content of a moral tradition. He contends that "adherence to principles must not be conceived as self contained; it must be conceived of as being bound up with and modifying some kind of content" (Peters, 1974, p. 288).

This content includes the various views in a society concerning (a) what sorts of activities are worthwhile; (b) what obligations and duties are associated with various social roles such as teacher, father, husband, etc.; (c) what general rules govern conduct between members of a society;

(d) what motivating purposes are acceptable; and (e) what character traits are desirable.

Contribution of John Wilson

A second major figure in the cognitive-decision approach is John Wilson (Wilson, 1973a, 1973b; Wilson, Williams, & Sugarman, 1968). Wilson, who has written voluminously on the topic of moral education, has many interesting things to say both about its content and the way in which it might be conducted. I will mention, however, only what I take to be Wilson's most significant contributions to the field: his careful analysis of the components of moral competence, i.e., the knowledge, abilities, and dispositions necessary for making rational moral decisions; and his discussion of the means of assessing these components.

Since Wilson's conceptualization of the components of moral competence is based on Hare's (1963) analysis of moral reasoning, let me cite briefly the major conclusions of this analysis. According to Hare, moral judgments have two important logical features: They are prescriptive and universalizable. By prescriptive is meant that the function of moral judgments is to guide conduct, to tell us what to choose and do. A particular moral judgment is universalizable when it commits one to a moral rule governing all cases similar in relevant ways to the case being judged. Combining these two features, we see that making a moral judgment entails

prescribing universally, i.e., prescribing for all persons in relevantly similar circumstances. Given these logical features of moral judgment, it is a necessary condition of the rationality of such a judgment that the judger is able to accept the universal prescription implicit in it.

The components of competence Wilson identifies as necessary to making rational moral decisions can be summarized as follows (Wilson, 1973a, pp. 38-39):

- Having the concept of a "person"
- Claiming to use this concept in an overriding, prescriptive, and universalized principle
- Having feelings which support this principle, either of a "duty-oriented" or a "person-oriented" kind
- Having the concepts of various emotions
- Being able in practice to identify emotions, etc., in oneself, whether these are at a conscious or unconscious level
- Being able in practice to identify emotions, etc., in other people whether these are at a conscious or unconscious level
- Knowing other ("hard") facts relevant to moral decisions
- Knowing the sources of these facts, i.e., where to find them out
- "Knowing how"--a skill element in dealing with moral situations as evinced in verbal and nonverbal communication with others
- Being in practice "relevantly alert" to moral situations and seeing them as such
- Thinking thoroughly about such situations

- Making an overriding, prescriptive, and universalized decision to act in others' interests, as a result of the foregoing
- Being sufficiently wholehearted, free from unconscious countermotivation, etc., to carry out the above decision, when able

Wilson has done much of the conceptual spadework necessary for developing appropriate measures to assess the degree to which persons have acquired the various abilities and dispositions needed for rational moral decision making. He makes clear that the assessment of moral competence is a subtle and complex business:

> In attempting to assess human (rational) behavior we have to assess S's reasons, and the rules or principles S follows when he performs the action. This cannot be done merely by observing overt physical movement--by just taking photographs, as it were. We have to know what goes on in S's "head," what "overriding syllogism" S is following at the time. It may seem that the researcher can easily guess (induce) this from S's overt behavior; and under certain conditions this may be true. But these conditions are not easy to establish. (Wilson 1973a, p. 33)

In this quotation Wilson highlights an important distinction between cognitivist and noncognitivist approaches to assessment. Cognitivists are typically as much concerned with finding out the reasons behind what students do as they are with finding out what students do. Noncognitivists tend to be relatively unconcerned with students' reasons. Behavior is their focus.

Wilson goes on to make some very worthwhile suggestions

about the ways in which we might attempt to assess each of the components he has identified. Unfortunately, little has yet been done in following up his suggestions.

Research Problems and Successes

So far I have portrayed, at least roughly, the general goals of the cognitive-decision approach and the more specific components of knowledge, abilities, and dispositions it seeks to develop. Ideally I should now go on to review the research concerning the best ways to develop these components and summarize for you our current state of knowledge about these matters. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to identify the relevant literature. Consider, for example, the component Wilson identifies as Emp, the ability to determine the emotions of others. Presumably, the large body of literature on empathy should tell us something about how this ability may be developed. But immediately we run into problems. Researchers often operationally define empathy in such a way that it is not clear what relevance, if any, it has to the ability called Emp. Consequently, one has to do a great deal of searching to find research that is clearly pertinent. Even then there is little which speaks to the problem of how Emp may be developed in an educational setting. One notable exception is the work of Natale (1972), who attempted to increase empathy by teaching critical-thinking skills. (Natale also provides a useful review of the literature on empathy.)

His experimental program significantly increased student performance on at least one measure of empathy that could plausibly be taken to be a measure of certain aspects of Emp.

Similar difficulties are encountered in attempting to identify the research relevant to the teaching of the other components. Presumably the body of research on resistance to temptation and delaying gratification has some relevance for teaching persons to do what they have decided is the right thing to do. Presumably the research on altruism and helping behavior has some relevance to our concern with teaching persons to adopt the principle of considering the interests of others.

But we must beware of making uncritical assumptions regarding such relevance. In particular we must keep in mind Wilson's caution that useful research must employ assessment measures which take account of subjects' reasons as well as behavior. Much of the research concerning altruism, resistance to temptation, etc., does not do this.

In sum, I cannot tell you what we know (as a result of research) about how to achieve the objectives of the cognitive-decision approach. Finding out what we know is itself a conceptual and empirical task of considerable proportions. My guess is that in the final analysis, research to date has very little to tell us.

One thing we do know as the result of several good research studies of a very different sort is that we can successfully teach some rational moral decision-making abilities in a school setting. Two such studies are worthy of mention here. Oliver and Shaver (1966) devised a curriculum focusing on discussion of controversial social-values issues. This curriculum attempted to teach concepts and skills for analyzing societal issues, as well as knowledge about the issues. Students in the experimental program had significantly higher achievement than did those in the control group on tests measuring analytic concepts and skills. These analytic concepts and skills are basically ones that cognitive decisionists would think necessary to rational deliberation about values issues concerning social policy. They include, for example, the ability to differentiate factual claims from values claims, the ability to detect and clarify ambiguous or confusing uses of words, the ability to determine the reliability of factual claims, and the ability to identify particular decisions as falling under general values principles.

Noteworthy also is the work of Meux, Evans, Applegate, Casper, and Tucker (1974). This project developed materials to teach a set of abilities identified as relevant to making rational values decisions. Included were abilities related to identifying and clarifying values claims, gathering and assessing relevant empirical claims, identifying the values

standards that make facts count as reasons for a values judgment, and determining the justification for a values principle. Judged by paper-and-pencil tests, students in the experimental program made significant gains in abilities related to several of these tasks.

To claim that either of the above educational programs had outstanding success would be unwarranted. Still, even modest success in this admittedly difficult project should be reassuring to the cognitive decisionist.

Strengths of the Cognitive-Decision Approach

The major strength of this approach is that it embodies the most justifiable view of the nature and aims of moral education. Richard Peters, who has carried out a detailed analysis of the concept of education, characterizes it as initiation into worthwhile knowledge and understanding:

> The more recent and more specific concept [of education] links such processes with the development of states of a person that involve knowledge and understanding in depth and breadth, and also suggests that they are desirable. (Hirst & Peters, 1970, p. 25)

It should be clear that knowledge, as Peters is using the term, does not mean mere information. It involves rational belief, i.e., belief supported by evidence that is warranted and that is understood by the believer.

In contrast to education, indoctrination, according to

the analysis of Flew (1966) and Green (1964-1965), involves the initiation of persons into doctrinelike beliefs such that these beliefs are fixed and not held on the basis of evidence. Consequently, new evidence has no effect on the beliefs. The reason indoctrination is condemned almost universally is that it does not respect the person as a rational being with the right to construct his beliefs on the basis of his own tests against experience.

Clearly, then, to initiate children into certain moral beliefs and their associated modes of conduct merely because they are dominant beliefs in the tradition of a society is to shun education and to court indoctrination. On the other hand, merely helping children clarify their moral views falls far short of anything that could count as education. If educating a person implies initiating him into justified or rational beliefs and the modes of reasoning by which such beliefs are established, then a justifiable view of moral education must give pride of place to initiating persons into rational <u>moral</u> beliefs and the modes of reasoning by which <u>moral</u> judgments are justified. This, of course, is just what the cognitive-decision approach does. But such a conception of moral education makes sense only if it is possible to explicate moral reasoning in such a way as to show that some moral beliefs or some ways of reasoning to moral conclusions

are more rational than others. This explains why cognitive-decision theorists spend so much time elaborating and defending conclusions about what counts as being rational in matters of morals.

Not only does the cognitive-decision approach represent the most justifiable view of moral education, but it also embodies the most defensible view of citizenship education for a dynamic democratic society. To be a good citizen in such a society, it is not sufficient that a person be socialized into the prevailing attitudes and beliefs; he must have the knowledge and skills to reflect critically on the society's institutions and policies and to reason constructively with others in working out better institutions and policies. It is the fact of change coupled with the ideal of individual participation in working out social policies, and the demand for consensus on justified policy (not just for consensus), that points to the need for citizens to be educated in rational decision making.

Unresolved Issues in the Cognitive-Decision Approach

Despite the obvious strengths of the cognitive-decision approach, there are some very important issues to be resolved by those who adopt this viewpoint. Some of these issues have to do with the conceptual framework within which cognitive-decision theorists work; others are more straightforward empirical issues. Let us turn first to those which

are conceptual. In so far as possible I will indicate how I think we may seek to resolve them.

Conceptual Issues

Perhaps the most basic challenge to the cognitive-decision position comes from those who allege that moral sentiments are, like matters of taste, basically nonrational; consequently it makes no sense to talk of moral judgments being true, justified, or well grounded. If this allegation were true, it would mean that all versions of cognitive-decision theory must be wrongheaded and nonsensical. I do not, however, regard this as a serious issue, since the noncognitivist allegation is obviously false. Cognitive theorists differ with regard to the ways in which they attempt to refute the allegation. Scriven (1975) takes perhaps the hardest line. Denying that there is any basic difference between the way in which empirical statements and values statements are justified, he argues that moral decisions can be justified by deducing them from definitional truths together with empirical truths or by showing them to be the best explanation of a given range of phenomena.

Scriven's argument probably would not be acceptable to the majority of cognitive-decision theorists. However, there is another rebuttal of the noncognitivist position that makes less strong claims and would, I think, be acceptable to cognitivists in general. This rebuttal calls attention to some

very obvious facts about our moral life and language and points out that a noncognitivist position can be maintained only at the expense of ignoring these facts: We do ask for and give reasons for moral claims; we do accept some reasons as relevant and reject others as irrelevant; we do challenge moral claims by offering counterexamples; we do ask for and give moral advice. None of this would make sense were moral commitments merely matters of taste or feeling and moral argument merely nonrational persuasion.

A second issue to be resolved by those taking a cognitive-decision approach has to do with explicating the standards of justification that apply to moral decision making. We noted earlier that although cognitive decisionists agree that there are standards of justification, they hold very different opinions about what the standards are. Consider, for example, the views of Hare (1963) and Peters (1966, 1972, 1974) discussed earlier. Hare, you will remember, regards any moral judgment as fully justified so long as the judger genuinely accepts the universal prescription implicit in it. Many other theorists accept this as one standard of justification but insist that it is not sufficient. They point out that Hare's view would allow as fully justified those moral decisions ordinarily taken to be paradigms of unjust decisions. For example, the judgment that one ought to kill every Jewish person one can find would

be fully justified so long as one could accept a universal prescription that anyone should kill Jews; and that this should be done even if the judger himself, or his family or friends, are Jews.

Peters, as we noted earlier, suggests that moral decisions are justified to the extent that they are consistent with fundamental moral principles and basic moral rules. Thus he sets more stringent requirements for justification than does Hare. He also has a problem that Hare does not: He must give some account of how decisions are to be justified when fundamental principles come into conflict.

This lack of agreement would appear to be a very serious issue for those who would devise a program of moral education using a cognitive-decision approach. To build a viable educational program, we need to know fairly clearly what standards of justification apply to moral decisions. It is not enough simply to know that there are standards.

There are several ways in which to resolve this issue, none of which I find completely satisfactory. One might be so convinced by the argument in favor of a particular theory of justification as to be unbothered by the fact that it is disputed by other theorists. One might then develop a program of moral education based on the favored theory. Wilson, I think, exemplifies this approach. Two sorts of difficulties attend this stance. First, the theory may turn

out to be wrong in important respects. The history of theories of moral justification should caution us against arrogance in this matter. Second, there is the political difficulty of getting support for an educational program based upon a theory which is obviously disputed.

A second possible stance is to build an educational program that does not presuppose the truth of any particular theory of moral justification. Such a program would attempt to teach students to seek adequate justifications not only for their moral judgments but also for the very theories of justification they adopt in justifying their moral judgments. In doing so, they would presumably be taught to guide their search by such general considerations of rationality as open-mindedness, consistency, and respect for facts, logic, and clarity of concepts. This, I take it, is the approach favored by Scriven (1975) and McClellan (1976). Although such an approach is appealing, it is not at all clear that it is feasible. It seems to require that children be capable of following meta-ethical theorizing such that they can make critical choices among theories of justification. If they lack this capability, they may be left at some middle level of justification which is for them arbitrary and which may perhaps be unjustifiable.

A third stance is made possible by a fact I mentioned earlier, i.e., that cognitive-decision theorists tend to

agree on the basic moral principles they regard as justifiable. Most would agree, I think, that the principle of equal consideration of interests is justifiable. Given this principle, they would probably also agree that it is possible to justify most of the fundamental principles and basic rules that Peters (1974) mentions. We might build a program in which these principles are taken at least tentatively as the standards for justifying moral decisions. We could attempt also to get students to examine the justification for these principles in so far as they are able. Students not capable of meta-ethical reasoning would not in this case be left with justifying principles that are themselves completely unjustifiable.

A third issue for the cognitive-decision theorist has to do with delimiting the area of moral decision. Some theorists have defined moral decision in such a way as to include only decisions about actions which may affect important interests of other persons. Other theorists, notably Peters, have defined the basis of moral decision more broadly. Thus Peters regards becoming committed to worthwhile activities as part of moral education. Resolving this issue is really a matter of deciding how big a task to fit under the rubric of moral education. The broader conception of moral education makes it virtually coextensive with education in general.

My own preference is for the narrower conception, since this in itself is likely to be a complex and demanding enterprise.

If we are going to be able to tell how well we are accomplishing the task of moral education, we must have a clear conceptualization of the components--the skills, abilities, inclinations, etc.--that are necessary to making and acting on rational moral judgments. This brings us to a fourth issue: What is the most fruitful way of conceptualizing these components? We have already taken note of the work of Wilson in this area. It should be clear, however, that Wilson's is only one of many possible ways of doing this. Determining which scheme is best is not a matter to be settled solely by conceptual analysis. It requires empirical investigation as well.

Empirical Issues

One question of fundamental importance for the cognitive decisionist concerns the extent to which it is possible to teach people the knowledge, abilities, and dispositons that are constitutive of rationality in moral matters. Some opponents of the cognitive-decision approach claim that you cannot teach people to think rationally about moral issues. This seems to me unwarranted. There are those who quite often decide moral issues rationally, and a great many more sometimes make rational moral decisions. Clearly they were not all born with the required ability and disposition.

Somehow they learned these things. If such things can be learned, there is at least a good chance that they can be taught, or at least "facilitated," by some structured expe-rience.

However, even if it turns out that some people can be taught to think rationally about moral issues, there still is the very important question of how many can learn how much in the way of becoming rational. Research bearing on this question tends to be discouraging to the cognitive decision-ist. The vast majority of programs designed to teach any sorts of reasoning abilities have had only very limited suc-cess. Further, it is well known that not all students, even in senior high school, have reached the stage of cognitive development which Piaget calls the level of formal opera-tions. Without achieving this level a student could probably not acquire the full range of rational moral decision-making abilities. It is, of course, an open empirical question whether central moral-reasoning abilities involving formal operations can be taught to persons who do not normally rea-son at the formal level. But I know of no research evidence that would make us very optimistic about this possibility. Finally, it should be noted that if Kohlberg's (1971) invar-iant-stage theory is correct, students will be incapable of accepting the equal-consideration principle as the basic principle for justifying moral decisions until they have

passed through preconventional and conventional orientations toward justification.

Given these considerations, it is easy to become overly pessimistic about the chances of teaching rational moral-decision abilities and dispositions. We must remember that teaching any mode of thinking is likely to be a very long and demanding business, requiring many years of serious effort, not just months. In my view, critical-thinking projects tend to expect too much achievement in too short a time. Demonstrably, we have been able to educate persons to rational thinking in mathematics, science, history, etc. But this has not been accomplished quickly. Since moral reasoning is every bit as complex and demanding as these other modes of reasoning, we ought to expect the teaching of it to require just as much time and effort.

This still leaves us with the question of whether there are some individuals, perhaps a large percentage, who cannot learn to be rational in making moral decisions. This may well be the case, but it is not known to be the case. Studies show only that many persons have not reached Piaget's stage of formal operations and Kohlberg's Stage 6; not that people are incapable of reaching these stages. All we know for sure is that our current educational means are insufficiently powerful. We should also beware of accepting too quickly the constraints Kohlberg's invariant-stage sequence

theory places on a cognitive-decision program of moral education. It is still an open empirical question whether direct teaching of the principle of equality and the grounds for accepting it can be effective even for persons in Stages 1 through 4.

While we are on the topic of the possible constraints on moral education, it is appropriate to note that the cognitive-decision approach does not regard moral education as an all-or-nothing affair. Some increase in a person's abilities and dispositions to make rational moral decisions is better than none. Wilson (1973a) makes this clear in discussing the ways in which components of moral competence can be present in persons in varying degrees. There are some kinds of learnings, however, that are central to moral competence, and these must not be eroded too far, lest we defeat the point of the entire enterprise.

Some critics of the cognitive-decision approach tend to regard it as a paper tiger. It is all very well, they say, to teach people to think rationally about moral issues, but surely the goal of moral education must be to teach people to act morally, to be moral. At this crucial point, they allege, the cognitive-decision approach lacks real teeth. Oliver (Oliver & Bane, 1971), for example, has become disillusioned with a strictly cognitive approach. Students in his experimental project apparently learned to apply rational

thinking skills and standards as tools for winning arguments with others but gave no evidence of using them seriously in making moral decisions.

Such criticism has bite because cognitive decisionists obviously want people to do what they have decided is the right thing to do. They focus attention on acquiring moral knowledge, or understanding, because they believe this will affect what people do. But getting someone to understand that x is right does not logically entail his doing x, even if we add the qualification that the understanding is genuine and sincere. (Many philosophers have argued for a position in which something like this entailment holds.) It certainly is possible for cognitive teaching not to have the desired influence on action. It seems, then, that the cognitive decisionist can support his position only by producing evidence that cognitive teaching influences action.

Citing instances in which cognitive teaching has obviously failed to affect action in the desired direction, critics are wont to conclude that cognitive teaching by itself cannot be effective; that we must seek more direct means of influencing action, including such things as changing affect, attitudes, and habits by various noncognitive means. Some cognitive decisionists have themselves argued for giving such techniques a place within an overall cognitive approach. As you will recall, Peters (1974) has attempted to reconcile the

inculcation of habits with the development of reason.

I think it would be a very serious mistake for cognitive-decision theorists to accept the charges of their critics and move readily in the direction of incorporating noncognitive techniques within their programs. Such a move would put them in a hazardous position with regard to the so-called paradox of moral education. That is to say, it may involve them in the use of manipulative, and therefore immoral, means to promote the ends of moral education. I am not here claiming that the use of noncognitive means to teach people to do what they have decided is right is always immoral. But I do think that those who would employ such means bear the burden of proof and must show that their specific efforts are not manipulative and thus not immoral.

The point is that we should employ noncognitive means only if it is true that cognitive teaching cannot be effective--and perhaps not even then. But even given the weakest interpretation of the claim that cognitive teaching by itself cannot be effective, critics of the cognitive-decision approach have not established the truth of that claim. Suppose we interpret it in such a way that its truth could be established by showing that most plausible cognitive-decision approaches had been tried and had failed. The matter would still be problematical, for we have scarcely begun to use our ingenuity and resources to devise and implement cognitive-

decision approaches to moral education.

These points are not likely to persuade anyone to adopt a cognitive-decision approach. In choosing a moral-education point of view one wants more than assurances that it is neither immoral nor known to be impossible. Let us see if there are more positive assurances to be offered. It was noted above that the relationship between knowing what is right and doing what is right is not one of logical entailment. I want to suggest now that it is not merely a contingent relationship either. Moral reasoning is basically reasoning about what to do. To know or understand that something is right is to have good reasons for doing it. To have a reason for an action is to have a motive for doing it. Peters (1974) is correct to emphasize the importance of motives in moral education and their relationship to principles and reasons. Moral reasoning is suffused with affect from the very beginning. Affect is not something tacked on to the supposedly cold logic of moral reasoning. There is no mystery about how moral knowledge motivates. Moral reasoning begins in the context of human wants, desires, and interests. Moral knowledge is ultimately akin to knowledge of what I <u>want</u> to do when I fully understand the consequences of the alternatives before me.

Cognitive-decision approaches to moral education have no greater problem teaching people to do the right thing than do

many noncognitive approaches. The problem for both arises because in many cases people are subject to conflicting motivating conditions. For instance, one may be motivated by his moral decision to tell the truth and may also be motivated to lie by his desire not to get into trouble. Our problem is to enable students to see the nature of moral reasoning clearly so that the motives associated with moral decisons are strong enough to override other motives that have not been rationally examined. Notice, however, that this does not necessarily entail abandonment of the cognitive-decision approach. What we must ensure is that moral decision making is always seen as a genuine process of deciding what to do. We must never allow it to be merely an intellectual game. Reasons considered in deliberation must be genuine motivating reasons, not just considerations generally thought to be relevant.

Recommendations for Research and Development

Clearly, there is much we must learn if we are to have effective moral-education programs. In this section I will mention a few kinds of research and development that deserve high priority.

1. A high priority, perhaps the highest, should be given to the development of materials and programs for training teachers. It may seem odd to suggest that we be concerned

with teacher preparation before we have developed reliable techniques and methods to attain the various moral-reasoning abilities and dispositions; the latter are usually taken to be prerequisite to the former. Still, there are good reasons for setting this order of priorities. These reasons become clear when we contrast our capability for moral education with our capability for conducting historical or scientific education.

We now know quite a lot about what it is we want to accomplish in the way of moral education. In terms of goals, moral education is on fairly equal footing with regard to history or science education. But our capability for history and science education is greater--not because research has determined the most reliable and effective means of attaining the educational objectives in these areas. It has not. But we do have history and science teachers who understand the concepts and ways of reasoning embodied in history and science as well as the established historical and scientific conclusions. Given this understanding, teachers can use their general knowledge of teaching and learning to devise a variety of worthwhile activities and methods. Now, with regard to moral education we have no large number of teachers who are well versed in the concepts and modes of reasoning peculiar to the area.

Teaching prospective teachers a set of procedures and

standards of moral reasoning that they can pass on to their students will not do, although this would be better than nothing. What the moral educator needs is some sensitive understanding of moral reasoning such that he can exemplify it and initiate students into it in conjoint inquiry. This understanding is like the knowledge needed by a science or history teacher. It is doubtful that anyone has ever produced any significant history or science as a result of learning to follow a recipe. It is well known, for example, that descriptions of procedures and techniques for doing science tend to be virtually useless in teaching persons to "do science." We should note, in this connection, that moral education is not so much concerned with teaching students <u>about</u> moral reasoning as it is with teaching students to <u>do</u> moral reasoning.

Oakeshott (1967) makes the point that judgment in any field, by which he means sensitive and fruitful thinking in a field, cannot be taught directly. It is imparted obliquely by those who have it and exemplify it to students in their work. The good teacher of history is not the one who merely teaches the conclusions of historians or describes how historians work. Rather, he is the one who engages us in historical thinking with him, attuning us to the fruitful question, the important distinctions, the weighting of a bit of evidence. Nor is it necessary that this teaching all be done

by a teacher—in the flesh. Much can be learned about scientific reasoning, for example, by studying the ways in which noted scientists have pursued their inquiries. This, I take it, is the real purpose to be served by the study of the history of science.

The problem faced by moral educators, then, is that we do not have a corps of teachers steeped in the tradition of serious moral reasoning, nor have we identified a body of literature exemplifying such reasoning. The teachers we must rely upon for conducting moral education are analogous to science teachers who know only what science they have picked up from the popular press, from their own problem-solving attempts, and from debates with their friends. Indeed, to make our hypothetical science teachers truly analogous we must suppose as well that they either are unconvinced that it is possible to arrive at well-founded scientific conclusions or do not take scientific reasoning seriously as a way of deciding what to believe about the world. Moreover, I fear that the situation is only made worse by much of what is currently being written about moral education, for it often gives the mistaken impression that by learning a few relatively simple techniques, teachers can make a significant contribution to the moral education of their students. Having students attempt problem solving under the guidance of a teacher knowing little about scientific reasoning has not

proved to be a fruitful approach to teaching science. It seems unlikely that having students discuss moral problems under the guidance of teachers who know little about moral reasoning will prove to be any more fruitful.

What materials and techniques, then, would be worthwhile for preparing teachers of moral education? Adequate materials for teaching about moral reasoning already exist, but there are two other sorts of materials which need to be developed. First, we need to identify or create a body of literature in which serious reasoning about moral issues is exemplified. This literature should exhibit diverse kinds of justifying arguments, be intelligible to persons having little background in moral theory, cover a range of different sorts of moral issues, and involve the application of a variety of moral principles. The purpose of this literature is to give prospective teachers a sense of the nuances of moral deliberation. To maximize its effectiveness, we should also develop a gloss for the writings, identifying the features of the reasoning contained in each document.

Second, we need to collect a large number of samples of the moral reasoning of students. These samples should be analyzed in at least two ways: (a) in terms of the distinctly different kinds of justifying arguments used, and (b) in terms of the kinds of mistakes to which students fall victim. This sort of material is vital; access to it has the

same importance for the prospective moral educator as access to cadavers has for the prospective surgeon. Actual moral reasoning is likely to be far more rich and diversified than examples we could construct; teachers have to know how to participate constructively in actual moral reasoning. Since samples of reasoning cannot be recorded except as they are manifest in discourse, we shall have to use our imagination to devise ways of getting students to think aloud about moral questions.

2. Second on our list of priorities should be the development of valid and reliable instruments for assessing the attainment of the knowledge, abilities, and dispositions constitutive of moral reasoning. To say that our available assessment techniques are inadequate is to understate the case. They are intolerably poor. The difficulties of such assessment were alluded to earlier. If the job is to be done well, it will require a team having both philosophic and psychometric competence, and such a team is not easily put together. Because of differences of background and training, philosophers and test developers tend not to speak the same language. My own experience is that it takes considerable time, effort, and good will before they are able to understand one another fully.

3. Finding effective methods of teaching the components of moral reasoning is truly a Herculean task. Initially we

must rely on the good sense of experienced teachers who understand moral reasoning and the point of moral education. Probably our best approach to research in this area is an indirect one. Since there are many ways in which people go astray in their moral reasoning, we should determine those ways which are typical and should teach methods to check reasoning and guard against mistakes. We also should seek to determine what it is that various kinds of students fail to learn, and why. In other words, our research efforts may be most fruitful if they are directed toward cases in which rationality breaks down. In addition, we should seek to identify and change more general conditions that interfere with moral education, e.g., the social or authority structure of the school or unintentional conditioning of students by their teachers.

One final point needs to be made about research leading to effective methods of moral education. Because we talk of moral-reasoning abilities, we may too easily fall into thinking that we are concerned with skills, i.e., performances that can be learned by practicing. We may forget that having an ability can be largely a matter of having certain kinds of concepts and knowledge. Consider, for example, an ability thought by many to be essential to moral reasoning: imagining oneself in the situation of another so as to appreciate the consequences that an action has for him. While there may

possibly be some element of skill involved in this ability, it seems to be mainly a matter of possessing appropriate concepts for understanding the situations of others and knowledge about the other person. Consider, too, the ability to determine when a moral decision is called for, i.e., when it is appropriate to take the moral point of view; this sort of ability seems to depend largely on a set of moral concepts which sensitize one to the morally relevant features of situations.

A research program aimed at developing effective ways of teaching moral reasoning might well begin by finding out what concepts are crucial to such reasoning and then finding effective means of teaching these concepts.

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IMPLICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS: COMMENTS ON JERROLD R. COOMBS'S PAPER

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Some questions are raised about the historical perspective of Coombs's treatment of the cognitive-decision approach to moral education. The distinctions between moral experience, practical reasoning, and moral reasoning are discussed and their implications for schooling examined. It is argued that the current public pressure for moral education is best understood as a desire for the school to undertake moral training, and that the school can do the latter only under very special conditions. The cognitive-decision approach is defended as providing rational legitimation for the school's claim to autonomy in moral education.

Jerrold Coombs's paper is a clear comprehensive analysis of the cognitive-decision approach to moral education. He explicates and defends the theoretical stance of this approach and goes on to describe and assess the state of the art with respect to implementing it in the schools.

I agree with Coombs that the clarification of meanings and concepts is far ahead of the empirical research needed for pedagogy, although Coombs and Milton Meux have undertaken a number of the latter inquiries with considerable success. Some of the difficulties in using the cognitive-decision approach in the schools have been attributed correctly to lack of appropriate materials and some to the classroom

teacher's lack of sophistication in moral reasoning. However, the reservations I have about the paper may indicate why even the analysis of the difficulties, as well as the theoretical position, needs to be considered in a perspective broader than that of moral discourse.

Historical Perspective

One of my reservations concerns the degree to which the authors selected for discussion (Peters, Wilson, Hare) adequately represent the cognitivist tradition in ethics and moral education. If the sine qua non of the cognitivist position is a belief that moral decisions can be defended rationally by moral reasoning, then Plato and Aristotle down to Kant and W. D. Ross, with innumerable figures in between, would have to be included among the cognitivists. Many of these philosophers differ as to how the moral premises are themselves cognized (intuition, common sense, divine illumination) but agree that the reasoning from these premises can be not only valid but also an essential feature of moral conduct.

Even when pleasure is accepted as the only, and the only justifiable, motive for action, the prudential calculation of consequences is defended as a rational process--at least, Jeremy Bentham, the archutilitarian, thought this was the only way ethics could be rational. This expansion of the

class of cognitivists does not empty the class of noncognitivists. It is still well populated by the emotivists, subjectivists, mystics, and relativists, both existential and methodological.

Regarding moral education, Plato, in the Protagoras, explored the implications of the question, Can virtue be taught? The current effort to find methods of conducting moral education formally was anticipated by Socrates's query as to why, if virtue was knowledge, there were no specialists to teach it. And Protagoras's answer--that everybody teaches virtue--is highly relevant to whether schools can carry on moral education if the circumambient culture is not already doing it. Furthermore, it would be difficult to find an educational theorist of any historical stature who did not have views on moral education.

Distinctive Feature of Moral Experience

These animadversions on the representativeness of the authors chosen by Coombs to illustrate the cognitive-decision approach are not merely pleas for historical and doctrinal piety toward our philosophical ancestors. If, as Coombs intimates, the technical sophistication of the public school establishments with respect to ethical theory is not well developed, then they may very well get the impression that moral education was invented in Britain in the last decade.

If there is anything the public schools do not need, it is a bandwagon for moral education; in American education, ignorance of history is often the mother of innovation.

If the cognitive-decision approach is what Coombs describes, then it gives rise to another reservation. It has to do with that special feature of experience that makes it distinctively moral. Coombs notes that moral reasoning is a species of practical reasoning and is distinguished by proceeding from a moral ideal or set of moral principles as major premises. But this does not define moral. Not all reasoning from wants, needs, goals, or even ideals to means of achieving them is moral. Reasoning on how to get pleasure, power, glory, and money can be logically correct and practically efficacious and yet not moral.

What I have in mind here is expressed by Mandelbaum's observation:

> In some choices we feel that one of the alternatives places a demand on us, that we are obliged, or bound to act for it. This feeling of obligation appears as being independent of preference, as many of the alternatives within our experience do not. Where neither alternative has this character, where our choices are wholly matters of preference or desire, the choice which we face does not appear as a moral choice. (Mandelbaum, 1955, p. 50)

It is perhaps no accident that in Coombs's paper, if my impression is correct, the words ought, duty, and obligation are not mentioned, and the words right and wrong are mentioned infrequently. Yet it is this quality of being

demanded or commanded, as perceived in situations that present us with alternatives, which has challenged moral philosophers and ethicists to find appropriate concepts and language for its expression. Much of the philosophical controversy has concerned the possibility of deriving prescriptions from descriptions, i.e., deducing the ought from the is, but phenomenologically the perception of an is that is already an ought lies at the root of moral experience. Perhaps, as Mandelbaum concludes, "All moral judgments are grounded in our apprehension of relations of fittingness or unfittingness between the responses of a human being and the demands that inhere in the situation to be faced" (Mandelbaum, 1955, p. 181).

In any event, for moral education, sensitivity to such fittingness and unfittingness is a necessary condition. Without it a person remains amoral, as amoral as a computer programmed to execute a wide variety of reasonings from moral principles. Without conflict between alternatives having this demand quality, there is no need for moral reflection. Making moral decisions can be regarded as processing the relatively unprocessed raw material of moral experience.

Implications for Schooling and the Community

It is this raw material for moral reasoning that presents a problem for schooling quite different from that confronting

the philosopher. The latter can take for granted that there are moral principles to which, by various psychological and social mechanisms, persons come to be sensitive. The philosopher can concentrate, therefore, on the logical properties of moral reasoning. For the parent and the school, however, sensitivity to the moral demand cannot be taken for granted. Even when it does develop "normally," whatever that is taken to mean, the sensitivity is to particular objects, persons, acts, and rules. Again, this is no special problem in a homogeneous community where the sensitization is to the same set of objects, persons, acts, and rules. Moreover, in such a community the ability of the child to generalize moral situations and to reason from principles is not confounded by diverse groups insisting on their own principles of justification. But when a school houses children of highly diverse parental groups, its first problem is not the quality of moral reasoning but rather whether the primary sensitivity to the ought situations is uniform enough to make it possible to undertake moral reasoning.

That is why moral education presupposes moral training, i.e., the formation by example, commands, and reinforcements, by individuals and the community, of dispositions to respect and introject certain rules of behavior, dress, speech, and demeanor. Given these dispositions or sets of habits which Aristotle thought prerequisite to the study of ethics, moral

education in the form of moral reasoning refines and justifies choices by rational means.

But in addition to being sensitive to the rules and principles of moral choice, individuals need knowledge about the different values domains: health, recreational, economic, associational, aesthetic, intellectual, and religious. They need to understand the range of these various domains, their phenomenology as modes of experience, the means for achieving them, and, above all, their relations to each other. Otherwise moral reasoning remains without the content needed to adjudicate claims of particular situations and persons upon ourselves and others. That is why purely formal approaches to moral education, whether as exercises in solving moral dilemmas or practice in moral discourse, have a poor prognosis for the kind of results envisioned by the public for moral education (see Broudy, 1961, chaps. 6-11).

Coming to some of the recommendations in Coombs's paper, I note the need "to identify or create a body of literature in which serious reasoning about moral issues is exemplified." This is a sound recommendation, but one would have thought that the literature and social studies in the conventional curriculum contained a plethora of instances of serious moral reasoning. Indeed, moral conflicts and attempts at resolving them constitute the major themes of literature and history. That a special project is needed for

teachers who hold the baccalaureate degree to identify these themes seems to say something about the teachers, or the A.B. degree, or both. If the implication is correct, then it is not surprising, as Coombs observes, that teachers lack a background in moral theory and reasoning. Coombs is probably right if by such a deficit he means ineptness in the techniques of moral argument; but only technical philosophers (by trade) have this specialized skill. Just how many of the specialized languages of various disciplines should be mastered by teachers is both a theoretical and practical question. There are those who believe that a generalized version of these skills can be taught in the form of special courses in critical or scientific thinking. If so, then the development of materials for this kind of program in the field of moral reasoning would seem to make sense.

No less sensible is the suggestion that samples of pupils' moral discourse should be gathered. These would provide valuable data for research into the process (logical and developmental) of moral reasoning. Whether it would make a difference in pedagogical strategy is another matter, and whether teaching children to reason correctly (or even intelligently) about moral issues would make a difference in their behavior is still another. I hesitate to defend the thesis that philosophers adept at moral reasoning behave better than the general run of people, but I am convinced that the

schools should not take the responsibility for the reduction of crime, vandalism, and political chicanery. The improvement of moral reasoning is justified if it can be shown to be a necessary ingredient of the educated person.

Moral Training versus Moral Education

If I may be forgiven a semijest to illustrate the difference between moral training and moral education, I would like to suggest Edith Bunker of TV's "All in the Family" uttering moral decisions and Coombs tracing out the moral reasoning to justify them. Edith has excellent moral training. She has a clear sense of what Ross calls the prima facie duties: not to lie, not to break promises, rot to inflict pain needlessly, not to steal. In the ordinary situations of life her decisions are immediate and infallible, at least as far as the vast majority of the millions of viewers are concerned. Her reasons for the decisions furnish most of the farce in the program, but this does not diminish her moral credibility; her very lack of sophistication increases it. Edith is not morally educated, just as she is not scientifically or artistically educated. She cannot reflect with the resources of knowledge and critical standards upon her experience. I am quite sure that Coombs is morally educated; i.e., not only has he had good moral training, but he is also ready to reason about it. Much as we agree that moral education is

our goal, it may not be amiss to remind ourselves that for most of the constituencies clamoring for the schools to do something about morals, moral training is about as far as they would want the schools to go.

The Cognitive-Decision Approach Legitimates Autonomy

As I have stated, I have no quarrel with Coombs's recommendations for materials, samples of moral discourse among students, and increased sophistication of teenagers. I would suggest more attention to research on the social conditions under which moral training and moral education can take place in the school, especially in the public school. This is important for the cognitive-decision approach, as it is for all the others, because without the steady reinforcement of the community and its institutions, schools do not accomplish much in the way of moral training and therefore in the way of moral education. In a corrupt community the efforts of the school in this regard are futile. Furthermore, communities with rigid homogeneous loyalty to a code of conduct may not welcome moral reasoning that questions the application of that code. Communities harboring a wide variety of ideologies, codes, and value commitments are also inimical to moral education because they can paralyze the school completely. All in all, the cognitivist approach is about the only one on which the school can claim any autonomy, because

insofar as knowledge, scholarship, and rationality have any place in morals, the school does have a legitimation of its authority to conduct moral education.

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COGNITIVE DECISION AND MORAL SKILL: COMMENTS ON JERROLD R. COOMBS'S PAPER

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The author suggests that the foundations for an adequate approach to moral or civic education are less likely to be discovered in the development of moral theory than in the theory of choice. The latter generally begins with a concern with nonmoral goods and can be extended to learning to think about moral matters. Further, no adequate approach to moral or civic education can escape giving serious attention to the problems of teaching history.

Within the scope of 5 to 10 pages, it is impossible to do justice to many subtleties and important points raised in Coombs's treatment of the so-called cognitive-decision approach to moral education. His review is fair and judicious. I have no quarrel with it and will simply add two or three points.

Knowledge of Moral Development Prerequisite

The cognitive-decision approach, as Coombs presents it, is derived from modern moral theory, which provides us, as it were, with a map of the logical structure of moral reasoning. We may borrow a phrase from Bishop Butler and say that moral theory gives us an account of the rational architecture of the "moral institution of life" (Butler, 1914, p. 25), but

it tells us almost nothing about the process of "induction" into that institution. For that we need an understanding of moral development. The principal virtue of Kohlberg's work is that it provides us with some insight into that process. Without such developmental insight the cognitive-decision approach to moral education--however correct it may be as an expression of moral theory--tends to turn into an educational program on teaching moral philosophy. No one, I believe, would seriously propose that teaching moral philosophy is a fit response to the interest in moral education, nor that teaching the skills of reasoning means that everyone should have a course in modern logic.

Relevance of Literature on Moral Choice

If we are to view moral education as education in the skills and dispositions of cognitive decision making, then there is an enormous body of material and principle that Coombs does not discuss because, I suppose, it does not claim to deal with moral choice and would not be viewed in moral theory as concerned with moral choice. I have in mind the large body of material on choice dealing with risk, skill in weighing marginal gains and losses, strategies of action, and general problems of evaluation. Such considerations are seldom--almost never--treated in moral philosophy. They are principles of choice more prominent in game theory, in the

economists' treatment of optionality and public benefits, and in certain aspects of law. Nonetheless, in these quarters we shall discover principles of choice that constitute perhaps the most fundamental elements of cognitive decision making. To the extent that moral reasoning is central to moral education, these principles of cognitive decision are basic to moral education. If we do not regard them as relevant to the conduct of moral reasoning, then we may have too narrow a view of what is moral or an unrealistic view of moral development.

Moral individuals and moral conduct will be rare in any society where being moral requires that one also be heroic. Few of us are candidates for heroes or martyrs. Moral conduct, in short, is something that we are more likely to expect of human beings when the world we live in allows us to be moral without too much risk. This is only another way of saying that moral conduct is rooted in human interests of a nonmoral sort. We all recognize that however morally correct and philosophically sound it may be, no theory of justice will prevail in the world unless individuals see the advancement of justice to be in their own self-interest (not to be confused with selfish interest).

Theory versus Nonmoral Human Interests

Coombs observes that the cognitive-decision approach to

moral education is not notably successful in cultivating moral conduct. The developed skills of moral reasoning are often used to make points in argument rather than as the basis for a decision to act. He suggests that the approach needs to be tried more tenaciously. I agree. But I also suggest that this failure may derive from the fact that such an approach to moral education is not rooted in human interests of a nonmoral sort. Instead, it rests upon a moral theory which itself does not begin with a study of human interests and does not include the principles of choice used in decisions on nonmoral goods (e.g., safety, security, friendship, health).

Moral-Education Principles Found in Skills of Public Choice

Coombs suggests that a strength of the cognitive-decision approach is that it rests on the principles that constitute the fundamentals of civic education "for a dynamic democratic society." He is right to the extent that such an approach offers some hope of an educational program that transcends mere socialization by including some kind of rational social criticism. This is an important, even vital, strength. It provides some perspective, for example, within which the distinctive educational values of respect for truth, reasoning, reasonable persuasion, and scholarship may

be cultivated. In this respect the cognitive-decision approach has much greater educational value than the morally vacuous perspective of values clarification, which takes no stand even on these central educational values.

Still, a cognitive-decision approach, as Coombs outlines it, will be an inadequate foundation for civic education. The principles of public choice are the principles of balancing or adjudicating the conflict between nonmoral goods. In public choice, according to the Coombs approach, the usual function of moral reasoning is not to determine choice but to exclude morally impermissible alternatives, so that we are left with a choice from among the remainder. But since the remainder are all morally permissible, the choice to be selected can hardly be determined by moral argument. Indeed, what we seek in a "dynamic democratic society" is agreement on what to do without having to agree on our moral beliefs and principles. We do indeed seek a society in which people reason about public choices. But the reasoning employed in that process is moral reasoning to only a small extent.

The twist that I wish to propose is this: Coombs suggests that we shall find the principles of civic argument in an extension of the skills of moral argument. I suggest that the more likely pursuit is just the other way around. We shall probably find the principles of moral education (and perhaps even moral theory) in the skills of public choice

because they deal more explicitly with nonmoral goods and rest more solidly on the consideration of human interests. Rational public choice involves decisions about such matters as how mortgages are granted; whether municipal bonds should be tax free; how fire protection, personal security, and health services are provided; how the relation of teachers and students should be governed; how the resources of the commmunity can be put at the disposal of all its members; and hundreds of similar questions having to do with the advancement and distribution of nonmoral goods. Such questions, as I have rendered them, are probably not suitable for use in elementary classrooms. But they do occur in simpler and more elementary form at all stages of education.

The rational model for dealing with such questions is not to be found in the skills of argument about moral rules, moral principles, and moral justification of claims about what is morally right and wrong. It is more likely to be found in the skills of sensitively balancing the conflicting nonmoral goods and interests of ourselves and others when, within a social group, we are called upon to decide what we should do. In short, we are unlikely to find the model of rational public choice in the cognitive-decision approach to moral reasoning about right and wrong. On the contrary, we are likely to find the principles of moral development in the skills and competence required for sensitive and rational

public choice. One may be extremely adept at the highest skills of moral reasoning, as portrayed in the literature outlined by Coombs, and yet remain inept and even useless and incompetent in serving his neighbor. On the other hand, a person who is competent in the rational and social skills of advancing the good of his neighbors is highly likely to be skilled in moral reasoning. Thus we are more likely to cultivate the principles of moral development by attending to the rational and social competence required in public choice through the cultivation of moral reasoning.

Moral-Education Skills

From such a perspective the skills we seek to develop in moral education are less involved with learning how to deliberate whether this or that is the morally right thing for me to do than with learning to decide whether this or that is a good thing (among all conflicting goods) for us to do. Thus, moral education remains a cognitive-decision approach, but at the outset it is placed in a context of public choice requiring deliberation about good and evil much more than about right and wrong.

The skills required are three:

1. If I am to claim that x is not a good thing for us to do (or a good way for us to do y), then I must be prepared to offer a better way. This lesson is profoundly important:

The mere claim that x is not a good thing to do (or is not a good way to do y) is perfectly compatible with the claim that it is nonetheless the best that we can do. To claim that our practices are defective, that our social institutions are faulty, even that they do not embody moral principles very well, are judgments that should come as no news to anyone. After all, the world is defective. We ourselves are defective. Such criticism, taken by itself without accompanying recognition of a better and workable way, has no claim upon our attention. Learning this lesson entails learning a great deal about how the world works. It requires the acquisition of many very practical skills.

2. If one offers a better way, then one must be prepared to state what interests (goods) are or are not advanced by it and how the better way balances the conflict. In short, for whom is the better way better? This lesson is vital also. Just as the evangelical preachers learned long ago that stating the faith is a way of strengthening faith, so also persuasively formulating the interests of others builds empathy and sensitivity and helps to cement the public. Indeed, such an exercise, successfully carried out, may be taken as an operational definition of empathy. It is a moral emotion, although it can be cultivated through skill and attention to the nonmoral interests and goods of others. In the context of a school community, such an exercise would require older

children to attend to the interests of younger children; the links of empathy can and do extend across generations.

3. One must finally be prepared to consider whether the interests advanced or sacrificed are long run or short run, broad or narrow, and, finally, whether they are the sum of people asking, "What is good for me?" or "What is good for us?" This is a lesson that goes far beyond the mere identification and formulation of interests and goods. It requires their evaluation, weighing, and balancing.

The pursuit of these lessons will promote many moral dispositions. Although they represent a cognitive-decision approach, they do not do so to the exclusion of attention to the moral emotions, and these lessons could not be learned in isolation from practice and action. Furthermore, careful attention to the effects of these lessons, successfully mastered, will show that when taken together they constitute a formulation of what we mean by being morally responsible and morally competent.

Rootedness and Teleological Viewpoint

Two final observations: First, to these skills of public choice one would have to add another element--rootedness. By this term I mean one's personal sense of placement in time, locale, profession or work, and tradition. It should be cause for serious thought that none of the currently

discussed approaches to moral education gives prominent attention to the necessity of rootedness. Yet it is almost universally acknowledged that storytelling, particularly as it concerns one's own personal and group history, may be the most powerful pedagogical tool ever developed. No approach to moral education that gives only passing attention to the teaching of history can be anywhere near satisfactory.

Second, the perspective outlined here would be described by moral philosophers as teleological rather than deontological. That is to say, it is a view that gives primary emphasis to the concept of good rather than right and to the practical problem of securing human goods rather than following moral rules and principles. The distinction is technical and not always precise. It is worth observing, however, that, as far as I know, there are currently no programs of moral education based upon a teleological view of ethics. Kohlberg (1975) is explicit in his acknowledgment of working from a deontological view of ethics, and the literature reviewed by Coombs is uniformly deontological in approach.

There are two possible reasons for this state of affairs: (a) Moral theorists are generally agreed on the claim that any pure teleological approach to moral theory will be theoretically unsatisfactory. Therefore, if a program in moral education is to rest upon the most satisfactory approach to moral theory, it follows that it will not be teleological.

(b) Prominent educators, e.g., Kohlberg, have apparently, and I believe quite mistakenly, supposed that a teleological approach is a "bag of virtues" approach and educationally ineffective. But, as I have already observed, we should distinguish carefully between moral theory and moral education, between the architecture of "the moral institution of life" and the process of induction into it. Moral theory should not be ignored; but neither is it likely to be very helpful in discerning the course of moral education.

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THE COGNITIVE-DECISION APPROACH EXTENDED: COMMENTS ON JERROLD R. COOMBS'S PAPER

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The author suggests that the central concern of the cognitive-decision approach to moral/citizenship education is to improve the substantive rationality in moral reasoning--in short, to ground action in clear recognition of what we want and what we believe will get us what we want. The author poses the question, What do we, Coombs and the rest of us, want to achieve through moral/citizenship education? Those in power will inevitably want to increase the effectiveness of obedience training in children. But those who understand what practical reasoning is will recognize that learners must have freedom to act, and have that freedom in measure and degree unlikely to be achieved in compulsory schools. Such, at least, seems to be a logical extension of the cognitive-decision approach as outlined in Coombs's paper. The author proposes a community-based program of moral/citizenship education rather than a new curricular offering in schools.

This review of Coombs's paper is divided into three parts: (a) a beginning, here an overview statement of the social and political context that any practical proposals for moral/citizenship education must take into account; (b) a middle, here a reinterpretation of the cognitive-decision approach viewed in light of (a); and (c) an end, here a series of practical proposals for moral/citizenship education viewed in light of (a) and (b).

The ideas in this review are addressed to fellow members

of the educational establishment. When talking about moral/citizenship education we are talking about helping the younger members of this society to be more rational in a practical sense of the word, i.e., wise and compassionate in making ethical and political decisions. The cognitive-decision approach to the field begins with the obvious fact that men and women in various times and places have discoursed on the wisdom and compassion of individual and collective decisions. Such practical discourse cannot be a rational activity unless there are standards against which contradictory claims can be judged. If we can identify the underlying standards of discourse and help our young fellow citizens learn how to apply them in making individual and collective decisions, then we will have accomplished one (but not all) of our major objectives in moral/citizenship education.

The preceding sentence contains the great truth of the cognitive-decision approach to moral/citizenship education. But it is a reflexive truth: To talk about moral/citizenship education presupposes that we know what such standards are and that we can apply them in judging ideas and beliefs. That is to say, we are engaged in practical discourse; we are not merely moving air. Hence we must exemplify the common moral virtues we seek to help others achieve. (The case

is different, of course, with supererogatory virtues--if there be such.)

One of the standards that applies to all practical discourse is respect for context. Successful moral/citizenship education is judged, in part, by the insight and accuracy with which a person assesses the social and political context of his actions. What are the most significant features of the context into which we might propose to introduce moral/citizenship education? I mention only a few general points as illustrative of the kind of thinking that would have to be pursued in depth in serious planning for such a program.

Social and Political Context

Historical Context

Moral/citizenship education is not exactly virgin territory. Any society that has reached the stage of development where it can, and therefore must, take thought for the education of its young is a society in which there are recurring calls for, and conferences on, moral/citizenship education. Such efforts seem to have the regularity of sunspots. Most of them accomplish absolutely nothing, except perhaps to assuage the conscience or fill the time of those who engage in them.

Is there any good reason to believe that this national Conference on Moral/Citizenship Education is not just one

more illustration of the same cyclical process? Do we have skills, techniques, materials, or morale superior to those of our predecessors? Specifically for this review: Does the cognitive-decision approach give us a new way of conceiving our goals in this area, a way that offers a chance of succeeding where others have failed? I think the answer to the last question is yes, and I will later give some practical examples. But the point here is that the absence of a clear-eyed, realistic appraisal of our historical setting is a guarantee of our failure to accomplish anything of significance.

Legal Context

The constitutional separation of church and state in this country has meant that the traditional, i.e., theological, grounding for morality is excluded from state-supported schools. And that has meant that moral education in schools has necessarily been trivialized or behaviorized. Such questions as, Where do these rules come from? or, Why must I obey these rules? are answered in practice by force or threat of force. The moral/citizenship education that in fact occurs in such a context is appropriate for slaves, not for citizens of a free society. Such was not the intent of those who forbade governmental establishment of religion, but it is an inevitable outcome.

The cognitive-decision approach starts from a nontheological grounding of moral rules and principles. It opens the legal possibility of a serious, rational program of moral/citizenship education in state-supported agencies. It also opens the door for all sorts of litigation by those who might claim that the cognitive-decision approach "establishes" atheism as a state religion. The latter view is unsound theologically. God did not give us knowledge of good and evil; Eve ate of that fruit in defiance of God's prohibition. To teach our young what we know about good and evil is a right we earned along with the obligation to eat our bread salted with the sweat of our brows. But litigation is seldom swayed by theological truths. Any serious program of moral/citizenship education will bring profound religious issues into the classroom. Will we be prepared--legally as well as intellectually--to deal with them seriously and responsibly?

Political Context

Every modern national state has established its authority to compel school attendance. In an institution based on compulsion, whatever ideological facade may be put on it, moral/citizenship education is first and foremost obedience training for inmates. In the vast majority of cases, when conferences are called for moral/citizenship education, the serious political purpose is to make that obedience training more effective, in particular to make its effects longer

lasting. What good is moral/citizenship education for the masses unless it produces docile subjects who will follow the dictates of duly constituted authorities? Disaffection among the lower orders--workers, children, prisoners, criminals, and others--is usually taken as a signal for more (and more effective) moral/citizenship education. Those in positions of power can always find "scholars," particularly psychologists, who are eager to respond to that signal.

Fortunately, the cognitive-decision approach cannot be used for such purposes. In fact, I do not believe that it can be used at all in an institutional setting where learners receive instruction under compulsion. Whatever may be the case elsewhere, in moral/citizenship education the medium is the message. A typical classroom, like a typical assembly line, office, or shop, is a medium which says: "These are the rules which you must obey. If you do, you will be rewarded; if you do not, you will be punished." The message of cognitive-decision morality is simply noise in that communication system. It would be futile and counterproductive to introduce it there.

Social Context

The major argument for succeeding in school is social. We say to children (and their parents repeat): "If you succeed in school, you can achieve upward social mobility or at least avoid downward mobility. To succeed it is necessary

only that you obey the rules and try to make it appear that you have learned some of the material presented in instruction. It is not necessary that you actually learn anything; genuine enthusiasm for any branch of knowledge is definitely contraindicated."

Does that message to children present an accurate picture of the social reinforcement system in the school? In "bad" schools, the answer is clearly no: Class, racial, ethnic or IQ biases may produce a system of reinforcement very different from the official success pattern described. But let us think about schools which have overcome those extraneous biases, "good" schools in which the message is a reasonably accurate picture of the actual reinforcement pattern. Can we introduce a program of moral/citizenship education based on the cognitive-decision approach in such schools? We can, but in my opinion it would be morally abhorrent to do so.

Consider Juanita. The cognitive-decision-based moral/citizenship education program really came across to her; she began to understand herself and her personal decisions in a profoundly changed way as a result of the program. And thus she finds that she no longer wants to play the game necessary for receiving social reinforcement in the school. But that's the only game in town for Juanita. There are precious few adults who can live wholesome, integrated lives under such a

condition of moral alienation; it is an intolerable burden to hang on a child.

Or consider Joanne. She takes moral/citizenship education just as she takes all other subjects thrown at her; she gets through it or by it, and she confirms already established beliefs that (a) she is no "brain," and (b) school subjects contain nothing of any importance to her life. Whatever may have been our intent in providing her with an exposure to moral/citizenship education, the result is inoculation. Joanne has been effectively sealed off from significant contact with the serious ethical and political thought of our culture.

Thus it is wrong, win or lose. For this reason, I do not believe it morally acceptable to introduce a cognitive-decision approach to moral education in any compulsory school setting, particularly one in which the typical reinforcement ("success") pattern operates.

The citizenship dimension of moral/citizenship education is equally difficult to integrate into a social-mobility system. We say to children (and their parents repeat): "In the game of social mobility, each player must compete as an individual against all others. And you must compete. All the other players will treat you as an opponent whether or not you actively play to win. You may make temporary alliances--join a team, get married, etc.--but in time all of

these may be (and most must be) broken up. You're on your own in the game of life."

In good times we point to the advertising pages and say to children: "Look at the grand life you can have if you succeed." In bad times we point to the lines at the unemployment office and say: "Look what happens if you fail." At no time do we point to ourselves and say: "Let's look at our fellow citizens, particularly those younger citizens entrusted to our care. What can we do to help them achieve a more satisfying form of collective life, a life in which cooperation replaces competition as the dominant mode of social intercourse?" Until we are in a position to ask that question seriously, we cannot use the cognitive-decision approach to citizenship education.

Economic Context

The economic analysis of moral/citizenship education, like that of any other form of education, requires that we consider moral/citizenship education as both an item of consumption and a form of investment rather like capital investment. Suppose we agreed to have our work force less well trained technically in order to devote more time and energy to moral/citizenship education. Suppose we had reason to believe that this would result in decreased production. (I think that we actually have excellent reason for that belief.) If we in fact allocated resources so as to achieve

that end at that cost, then moral/citizenship education would be an item of consumption with a calculable price. If, however, we believed that the general dissemination of this kind of training would produce a work force of greater productivity than would have otherwise been the case, then resources diverted from other uses and allocated to moral/citizenship education would be like a capital investment with a calculable rate of return. (In practical cases, the two approaches can be combined. We might accept a lower rate of return on moral/citizenship education when compared with other opportunities for capital investment and assign that loss as the cost of a particular item of consumption.)

In any case, there is a price tag. What we do not know, but should try to find out, is whether that price tag is reasonable for the value received. But how do we measure the value of moral/citizenship education? To the extent that we succeed at it, we also effect a reevaluation, often a radical transvaluation, of other values in our society. Moral/citizenship education thus becomes, quite literally, invaluable; there is no common currency in which we may assign it a worth to compare with the price. And that conclusion holds with certainty if we are talking about moral/citizenship education from the cognitive-decision approach. (For you technical philosophers: That is also the upshot of John Rawls'

[1974] presidential address to the American Philosophical Association).

The Nature of Moral/Citizenship Education

Before we can decide how much we are willing to pay for the moral enterprise as a whole, we must consider the prior question: What is the essential nature of that enterprise? The cognitive-decision approach to moral/citizenship education is grounded in a refinement and then an answer to that prior question. I want to try to show as briefly as I can a cognitive-decision conception of the moral enterprise which goes just a bit further than that of Coombs, with particular reference to those points where he allows himself to be limited by the formulations of Professor Peters.

Let me summarize even further Coombs's summary of the cognitive-decision approach.

Goals

Coombs states that the primary goal of moral/citizenship education is "to teach students to make and to act on intelligent or rational decisions about moral issues." In any teaching claim expressed in the form "to teach B to y" (McClellan, 1976)--which is a reduction of Coombs's statement--there is the possibility of creating a misleading ambiguity. Two quite different goals are stated. If you set about to teach children to make intelligent or rational

(henceforth I shall use only rational) decisions on moral issues, you presuppose either that they already know how to make rational decisions; or that you can and will teach them how in the course of, or instead of, teaching them to make decisions on moral issues. But to teach B how to y indicates that it is a skill we are after. Fine. We will come back to that skill below.

But in stating the goal of moral/citizenship education as he does, Coombs means more than helping students to acquire a skill such as playing chess, which they may use if it pleases them to do so and ignore if they choose. He also means teaching a disposition or habit of making rational decisions about moral issues; here is our ambiguity. It is more than knowing how to make such decisions; it is making them--always, or at least mostly, when the occasion calls for the exercise of that skill.

As Coombs seems to understand matters, the habit of making rational decisions about moral issues can coexist with the habit of acting irrationally. That seeming possibility is forestalled by his further remark: "and to act on...rational decisions about moral issues." In this case is there a particular skill, a "how to y," correlative with "to act on...rational decisions"? Can you help persons to learn how to act on their decisions? I think you can, quite definitely; I want to say more about this skill below.

The phrase and to act on was put in here mostly to call attention to the fact that what we seek is students' acquisition of a habit or disposition of acting rationally on moral issues. That is what moral/citizenship education is for, if it is for anything; again, fine. Our educational goal includes both a skill and a habit--or rather, as I shall now try to show, an immense family of skills and habits which, taken together, enable one to participate in the moral enterprise, or take the moral point of view seriously. Let us look briefly at these skills and habits.

Skills

At the risk of oversimplification, let me summarize the complicated notion of a practical argument (the sort of reasoning Coombs discusses) as a logical relation among three propositions ordered as premises and conclusion. The question we will have to address is how to get 3 from 1 and 2.

1. A knows that he wants x.
2. A believes that doing y will get him x.

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3. A does y.

From A's perspective, the same argument looks like this:

1'. I want x.
2'. Doing y will get me x.

3'. _____

The blank at 3′ indicates that what follows 1′ and 2′ is not another statement of something going on in A's mind; it is A actually doing y. The practical argument ends in action, not in anything less--except when something intervenes between reasoning and action to prevent the latter from happening.

There are skills appropriate to each of the three stages in the practical argument.

With regard to the first premise, to know what one wants is to have warranted true beliefs about what one wants, a signal achievement, the outcome of a series of complicated tasks. The main tasks are (a) distinguishing what one really wants (i.e., wants after careful reflection on many things, including costs) from what one merely feels an impulse toward; and (b) giving due weight to both impulse and reflection in one's overall moral economy.

I think that Coombs implies (or at least indicates that he would concur) that these tasks are necessary to the moral life and that success at them requires the sorts of skills we might disseminate through moral/citizenship education. I wonder whether he will join us in accepting these further implications: We would accept A's claim to know that he wants x only if A has some warrant for "I want x." And having warrant for "I want x" entails showing that wanting x is consistent with a whole conceptual scheme--roughly, the

speaker's self-concept. In this crucial respect, knowing what one wants is exactly like knowing a basic theory (acquiring a structure, a Piagetian might say) in any other branch of science. And the skill is exactly the same as the skill involved in learning to get about in any other branch of science. Will Coombs come that far with the cognitive-decision approach?

If so, we might as well invite Coombs to accept the rest of the argument: The function of principles in knowing what one wants is nothing more nor less than the function of principles in any other branch of science! Principles help us keep our reasoning clear and straight. They help to organize particulars. They provide the logical structure within which we can understand the relation of each of the parts to all the others. Any principles which serve that function distinctively in practical argument--i.e., which provide the logical structure within which we understand the relation of wanting x to the whole of our valuational life (the whole pattern of our practical reasoning)--we may call moral principles. Will Coombs go that far?

(We know that we have long since parted company with R. S. Peters. But we must not tarry to try to set all that straight right now. Let us save it for some other occasion when more space and time are available.)

The practical upshot is that learning moral principles is

formally identical with learning basic concepts and their applications in any other branch of science.

To return to the premises of our practical argument: Can one want x, know that one wants x (as contrasted with merely feeling a positive impulse toward x), and yet not have any belief about what action one might take to get x? A person who says, "I know that I want x," in that strong sense of want, would be expected to have at least imagined the conditions under which he or she would act to get x. To say "I know I want x, but I cannot even imagine acting to get x" indicates an impulse toward x but not a want in this strong sense. Thus Premises 1 and 1′ in the strong sense entail that A believes there is at least some imaginable y which will get him to x.

But Premises 2 and 2′ are not merely entailments of Premises 1 and 1′. The second set of premises ties general (want) to specific (action); they join major premises to conclusions. There is a distinctive skill in morals as in the rest of science and mathematics: that of recognizing when to use what more general theorem in solving particular problems; all of which leads to the last stage.

With regard to the third element in practical reasoning, let us first consider the whole argument from the point of view of the external observer, i.e., as in 1, 2,...3. There is a distinctive skill in knowing how to explain actions as

conclusions in practical reasoning. When we recognize 3 as a valid step from 1 and 2 (as we must in, say, historical and psychological explanation), we do so because we recognize 3′ to be a valid deduction from 1′ and 2′ from A's perspective. It could not be the other way around, for 3 does not follow from 1 and 2 by deductive logic alone, no matter with what detail one specifies the texture of A's wants and beliefs in 1 and 2 (Malcolm, Note 1). Whereas we do say (and mean it) that, given a sufficiently detailed account of his or her wants and beliefs, A's action follows logically from 1 and 2, we do not say that it follows necessarily. Between the first two premises and 3′ there is a personal element, that of knowing how to draw the proper conclusion, the skill of acting on one's wants and beliefs.

But if A is to learn how to draw 3′ from 1′ and 2′, he or she must practice that skill. And 3′, please recall, is an action, not a statement. And that means that A must be free to act on his or her wants and beliefs. The only restriction that can be placed on A's freedom to act while A is learning the skills of practical reasoning is that A's wants and beliefs must be consciously held. The force of can in the preceding sentence is absolute. It is a logical presupposition of accepting Aristotle's, R. S. Peters's, and the commonsense distinction between practical and theoretical reasoning. Such an extension of the cognitive-decision

approach would seem to be required of Coombs by the logic of practical reasoning, even if not exactly entailed by the definition of practical reason as reason which eventuates in action.

Thus we have seen a variety of skills required in practical reasoning as viewed from the cognitive-decision standpoint. At least one of the skills--how to draw the proper conclusions to a practical syllogism--cannot be taught except under conditions which guarantee that a learner can act freely as the argument seems to require.

Habits

Here the case is open and shut. The only way A can develop the habit of acting on rational decisions is by exercise or practice, i.e., by acting on those decisions that seem rational to him.

Sigafoos Revisited

We might go further into the methods, materials, etc., that could be developed in a cognitive-decision approach to moral/citizenship education. Let us instead contrast the foregoing extension of the cognitive-decision approach with Coombs's story of the noble Sigafoos who refuses to drive home after drinking. The moral issue arises when Sigafoos discovers that he has drunk enough and wants to go home. Driving will get him home, he realizes, more quickly than any other action he might take. But he is also aware that

driving will endanger others. He holds to the moral principle, logically interrelated with many other principles, that he ought not act so as to endanger the lives of others. As Coombs says, the example is simple, but it illustrates how principles affect desires. Sigafocs does not really want to drive home, though he experiences an impulse to do so. If he has the good sense he seems to have, Sigafoos has arranged alternative means of transport and is now safely in bed sleeping it off.

This simple little story also illustrates how Peters started off on the wrong foot. The moral enterprise does not begin with taking seriously the question: "What are there reasons for doing?" Anyone who took that question seriously could not even begin to let us know; he or she would be in a catatonic coma. The human organism, thank God and the evolutionary process, is an active entity that can find reasons for doing just about anything! The world and one's inner states interact so as to provide plenty of reason-directed actions, more than anyone can actually perform. The question which Peters takes as primary never arises in practice. Starting off wrong, Peters never catches up.

The serious question is: Are there adequate reasons to organize our lives by principle rather than impulse? Indeed there are. In fact, what we seek in the moral enterprise is to adopt and act on those principles which, taken as a whole,

will give us the kind of life we want to live. If we cannot justify our moral principles on that criterion, then we had better forget all about teaching them to the younger members of our society.

Practical Proposals

Practical suggestions for advancing the cause of moral/citizenship education can be classified in two categories: (a) those which can be put into the existing machinery for research, development, and dissemination, and (b) those which require the establishment of quite different social arrangements.

Proposals Relating to the Existing Machinery of Research, Development, and Dissemination

The moral life is a life of action-cum-reflection, an alternation of thinking and doing and thinking about what is done and what is to be done. The problem here and now with introducing children to the moral life is that we have created an environment so hostile to life that we cannot allow children to act freely on their impulses and thus learn to bring them under conscious control. So we mus' set up arrangements such that children's impulses are controlled by others. As a society, we never really thought the issue through and decided to handle children in that manner; rather, we established arrangements contrived ad hoc as responses to changes--demographic, technological, etc.--in our

way of life. But the destructive effects of such arrangements are immense. They strike most severely against moral/citizenship education because freedom to act is a necessary condition for learning to make and act on rational decisions.

Is there anything concrete we can do to minimize the destructive effects of our social structure on personality, self-control, political acuteness, and so forth? The best ally we have is the imagination of children. Perhaps we can develop methods and materials of instruction which will (a) enable children (of all ages) to think imaginatively and creatively about the world they would want to live in, and (b)--here is the difficult part--make sure they have reasonably safe opportunities to discipline their imagination, to act responsibly, and to accept--that is, suffer and enjoy--the consequences of their actions.

The nearest thing to any such program that I have seen is the Philosophy for Children program built around Lipman's (1971) delightful little book, Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery. The depth and richness of Lipman's writing are clear marks of its self-conscious commitment to the highest standards of philosophical work. The artistry comes in preparing materials that satisfy these philosophical standards and at the same time capture and enliven the imagination of children.

One of the fringe benefits of introducing philosophical materials into primary and secondary schools is that children come to believe that they can understand things in a rationally satisfying way and thus come to expect and demand rationality in the rest of their world. To make most effective use of these materials, we need men and women who are themselves discovering the joys and turmoils of the self-conscious life to be teachers of philosophy to children. William Heard Kilpatrick (1926) said that the only great teacher of physics was the person who lived physics. That may or may not be true. What is true is that only a person who is trying to live the consciously reflective moral life can teach children to participate in that enterprise.

There is a great deal to be learned from values clarification, transactional analysis, and a variety of other techniques which can help children (and the rest of us) discover what we want and do not want. In using such techniques in the classroom, there is only a thin margin between being dull, routine, devoted to busywork, and being so intimate and personal as to invite burlesque and ridicule. Effective teaching is found only within a thin margin. In real life, where persons can act cooperatively to achieve common purposes, such problems with self-discovery techniques do not arise. What we need are creative ideas for smuggling in real freedom for children to act. Can we accomplish this without

creating more problems for our schools than we can handle politically?

Proposals Relating to Establishment of Nontraditional Social Arrangements

Interesting possibilities arise when we introduce the concept that ties moral and citizenship education into one thing: the concept of community. A community can be defined as a group of people whose existential interests and welfare are closely linked together and who act toward one another in common recognition of their existential interdependence. Moral/citizenship education in such a group helps the new members acquire those habits, skills, and desires which guide the conduct of life within that group. In a decent, well-ordered society, children achieve moral and citizenship competence just by growing up and taking a succession of community roles.

But merely decent, well-ordered communities can be intellectually dull and spiritually stultifying. As educators, we insist that moral/citizenship education must have a critical, reflective moment that marks it as distinctive from mere socialization. Can we develop experimental communities where children can learn the habits and skills of moral/citizenship competence naturally, i.e., by growing into that competence and at the same time learning to apply to morals the same critical intellect appropriate to any other branch of

science? I do not know. But we ought to set aside sizable chunks of money to try to find out whether such communities are possible. Let me suggest some places to look.

Ethnic communities. The survival and then revival of ethnicity in American life is among the most striking sociological phenomena of our century. If moral principles are universal, their application is always particular. And children come to live comfortably with universal principles only after getting acquainted with them in local, homey, community settings.

Would some ethnic communities be willing--given certain legal and financial benefits--to undertake the total education of their children, including their introduction to the moral enterprise--all through that community's distinctive ethnic heritage? Could we work out guidelines for subsidizing such ventures to assure that the cognitive-decision rather than the catechetical approach is taken toward the teaching of moral and civic virtues? Could we muster enough political power to grant such communities some relief from the uniform school code--including relief from compulsory school-attendance laws? The Amish case illustrates a principle that may be extended by legislative or administrative measures.

One requirement we should make absolutely inflexible: Social scientists or psychologists allowed in to study such

communities would be limited to those who are fully accepted members there.

Intentional communities. The last decade has seen a revival of interest in intentional communities, following a century of disillusionment resulting from the well-publicized failures of the 19th-century utopian ventures. As any reader of The Whole Earth Catalog (1971) knows, the technological and social bases for such communities are immensely stronger today than a century ago. With a minimum of financial subsidy and legal relief, an intentional community could undertake the education of its children based on the distinctive principles by which the adults in that community organize their lives. Again, the cognitive-decision approach gives us a criterion by which we can distinguish an educational from an indoctrinative community.

We might interest the Department of Defense in establishing and studying educational communities that can sustain themselves in the wilderness without dependence on the giant industrial plant of the nation, which cannot be defended against attack. For what we have learned about an enlightened ethical and political life--what we have here called the cognitive-decision approach to moral/citizenship education--is distinctly worth preserving somewhere, even if the rest of this society perishes.

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